

Legislative Updates of interest for Higher Education

Week of May 21 – 25, 2007

Budget Update: The Budget Conference Committee continues to meet to work out differences on the state's FY 07-08 budget and capital reserve bills. Once the committee concludes its work, the bill will be returned to the House and Senate for approval before being sent to the Governor for consideration. Also, the Senate acted on resolutions in the event the budget is not passed by the end of the session. S.787, a concurrent resolution, was adopted by the Senate and sent to the House for consideration that would extend Sine Die adjournment to enable the General Assembly to meet June 19 through June 21 if necessary. The House has not yet acted on this resolution. Additionally, in the event a budget is not finalized prior to July 1, the Senate passed a joint resolution (S.784) to enable the 2006 Appropriations Act to continue to remain until the 2007-08 Appropriations Act passed and took effect. This resolution has been sent to the House for consideration.

In the House –

The House Judiciary met on Tuesday and voted to report out of Committee favorably with amendments several bills reported on last week including: H.3964 which would enable concealed weapon permit holders to carry concealed weapons on educational facilities, S.213 which is legislation to enact the "Prevention of Underage Drinking and Access to Alcohol Act of 2007" and S.459, "Jessica Horton Act." The House received the Judiciary Committee's report on Wednesday. H.3964 was further amended by the Judiciary Committee such that concealed weapons permit holders could not carry the weapons on educational facilities unless the weapon is in a closed compartment of a vehicle or under a seat. S.213 was also further amendment by the Judiciary Committee, but continues to include changes as to when LIFE and HOPE scholarships and Need-based Grants recipients would lost based on convictions. By the end of the week, the House had adopted the Judiciary Committee amendment on S.459 and returned the bill to the Senate.

In the Senate –

The Senate received the report of Senate Education on H.3170 which would provide incentives for state scholarship recipients pursuing math and science. As a reminder, the Education Committee voted to amend the bill by striking the language approved by the House and replacing it with language from S.291 with additional amendments to the language as passed previously. The bill now awaits second reading. The Senate also received the Education Committee report on H.3379 relating to S.C. residents who have attended high schools in another state and eligibility for Palmetto Fellows and LIFE scholarship programs. The Senate voted to adopt the Committee amendment and give the bill its second reading.

Other –

By the end of the week, several of the higher education bills that had already passed the Senate had received House approval and were enrolled for ratification including: S.657 which is a bill to enact the S.C. Critical Needs Nursing Initiative Act, S.666 relating to Winthrop University's Board of Trustees membership, and S.322 that creates a college tuition assistance program for National Guard members and closes the National Guard Loan Repayment program to new participants. On Wednesday in a joint session of the General Assembly, members of Boards of Trustees were elected for South Carolina State University and Coastal Carolina University.

Reminder: Additional information on legislation referenced above and other legislation relating to higher education is available on CHE's website at http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Legisl/HigherEd_Legis_List.xls Links to SC's Legislative Website and other relevant information is also available on CHE's website at <http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/LegislativeSession07.htm>